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SUBJECT: MACEDONIA NOMINATES FORMER FM SRDJAN KERIM FOR
2007 UNGA PRESIDENCY

¶11. (U) MFA State Counselor for Multilateral Affairs Svetlana Geleva confirmed on September 16 press reports that the GOM has nominated former Foreign Minister and former Macedonian PermRep to the UN Srdjan Kerim for the 2007 UNGA Presidency. Kerim currently is the general director of the local media consortium "Media Print Macedonia," a member of the German WAZ media group. He also serves as WAZ's general director for Southeast Europe. He is affiliated with the Liberal Party, a junior ruling coalition member, but has never been an active member of the party.

¶12. (U) Kerim was born in Skopje in December 1948. He received a PhD in economics in Belgrade in 1982, where he was an active member of the Socialist Youth of Yugoslavia. Kerim worked as a professor of economics in Belgrade, Hamburg, and in New York from 1972-1991, teaching international economic relations. From 1986-1989, he was Minister of Foreign Economic Relations in the government of the Republic of Macedonia, then still a part of Yugoslavia. In 1989 he became Vice Minister and Spokesman at the Yugoslav Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

¶13. (U) From 1992-1994 Kerim worked for a private company in France. He resumed his diplomatic career in 1994, when he was appointed as the newly-independent Republic of Macedonia's Ambassador to Germany, representing his country in Switzerland and Liechtenstein concurrently. Kerim served in Berlin until 2000, and also served from 1999-2000 as the Special Envoy for the Stability Pact Coordinator for Southeastern Europe. Returning to Macedonia in 2000, he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, a position he held until 2001, when he moved to New York as Macedonia's UN PermRep. Upon his return from New York in 2003, he began working at "Media Print Macedonia."

¶14. (SBU) Urbane and sophisticated, the polyglot Kerim speaks English, German, French, Russian, Italian, Spanish, Bulgarian, and Serbo-Croatian (but not, surprisingly, Turkish, despite his Turkish family origins). A pro-Western, pro-U.S., active reformist since his youth in Yugoslavia, Kerim is viewed as hard-working, confident, and talented. Local Macedonian contacts consider him the best foreign minister Macedonia has had in its 15-year history. Kerim is married and has three sons. His father, Asan Kerim, was a successful businessman and politician in Yugoslavia, and was close to former Macedonian President Kiro Gligorov. Kerim plays tennis and enjoys fine whiskey.

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